Did the Judaizers that Paul rebuked in his epistle to the Galatians believe in the sinlessness of Christ, his death, burial and resurrection, and the need for faith in order to obtain salvation, along with circumcision?

Based on the text of the Epistle to the Galatians and scholarly consensus regarding the identity of Paul's opponents (often called "Judaizers"), here is the breakdown of their beliefs regarding the specific doctrines you asked about.

In short: **Yes**, they almost certainly believed in the sinlessness, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as well as the need for faith. Their error—and the reason for Paul's rebuke—was not that they *denied* these truths, but that they deemed them **insufficient** for salvation without the addition of the Mosaic Law.

1. Did they believe in the sinlessness of Christ?

Yes. There is no evidence in Galatians that the Judaizers attacked the person or character of Jesus.

- **Theological Context:** These opponents were likely Jewish Christians who accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah. To a Jewish audience, a blemished or sinful Messiah would be a contradiction in terms.
- **Paul's Argument:** Paul never defends Jesus' moral character in the letter, which implies it was not under attack. If the Judaizers had taught that Jesus was a sinner, Paul would have undoubtedly refuted that directly. Instead, he assumes they agree on who Jesus is, and argues that they fail to understand the *sufficiency* of what He did.

2. Did they believe in His death, burial, and resurrection?

Yes. They accepted these as historical and theological facts, but they misunderstood their power.

- **Paul's Logic:** In Galatians 2:21, Paul argues, *"I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, **Christ died for nothing**!"*
- **The Implication:** This argument only works if the opponents *did* value Christ's death. Paul is effectively saying to them: "You claim to believe in Jesus' death, but your insistence on the Law makes his death pointless." If they had denied the resurrection or death, Paul would have had to establish those facts first (as he does in 1 Corinthians 15 against a different

group). Here, he uses the agreed-upon fact of Christ's death to show the absurdity of their legalism.[1] [2] [3]

3. Did they believe in the need for faith for salvation?

Yes, but not faith *alone*.

- **Faith Plus Works:** The Judaizers did not teach "salvation by works" in the sense of ignoring Jesus entirely. They likely taught **"Christ + Moses"** or **"Faith + Law."** They believed that while faith in Jesus was the *start* or a necessary part of salvation, it was incomplete without obedience to the Mosaic Covenant (specifically circumcision and dietary laws).[2] [4]
- **"Completing" the Gospel:** In Galatians 3:3, Paul asks, *"Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?"* This suggests the Judaizers taught that faith in Christ began the journey, but the Law was required to perfect ("finish") it.[3]

4. Did they believe in circumcision?

Yes, absolutely. This was their primary distinctive requirement.

- **The Covenant Marker:** They viewed circumcision not just as a surgery, but as the necessary entry point into the family of Abraham. They likely argued that to be a true son of Abraham (and thus a brother of the Messiah), a Gentile must bear the sign of the covenant.[5] [6]
- **Motivation:** Paul suggests in Galatians 6:12 that their motive was partly to avoid persecution from non-Christian Jews by showing that they were still loyal to Jewish customs despite following Jesus.[7]

Summary Table: Paul vs. The Judaizers

Doctrine	Paul's Teaching	The Judaizers' Likely Belief
Person of Christ	Sinless Son of God	**Agreed** (Sinless Messiah)
Work of Christ	Died & Rose for our justification	**Agreed** (He died & rose), but felt it needed supplementation
Mechanism of Salvation	Faith **Alone**	Faith **Plus** Works (Circumcision/Law)
Status of the Law	Fulfilled in Christ; a tutor that is no longer master	Binding and necessary for perfection

Conclusion: The danger of the Judaizers, in Paul's view, was not that they were blatant unbelievers, but that they were **subtle corrupters**. They affirmed the facts of the Gospel (Jesus' life, death, and resurrection) but neutralized their power by adding human requirement to divine grace.

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